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VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

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VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

July 2012

President's Message-The Feedline

By Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX

Is it still spring time or has the dregs of summer by-passed us all this year?

I hope that those club members who were able to attend the BBQ event again this year had a good time. I know I did as did my XYL. Well she did until I stayed around way too late jawboning with other members. She apparently wanted to stop by the Foster's Freeze place over on Merchant Street for an ice cream. I never knew she wanted to do this!!! As this year's club president, I would really like to see more member involvement or more member suggestions as to how this club can be of benefit to the operator. Starting with the September club meeting, I'm going to put out a suggestion box for those attending club members to drop a note into it of what they would like to see this club promote or present. Of the survey I sent out earlier this year, there were a few of the returned surveys that included some suggestions or ideas about subjects or thoughts as to what the operator was wanting. Don't worry, but those notes on those returned survey forms will be given the utmost attention and discussion amongst the club's officers as to how best to implement those suggested ideas!

In talking with our club secretary recently, I decided that the monthly newsletter needs to continue through the summer unlike what has been done in the past. And I feel that despite our member's busy schedules during the summer including those members who take a summer vacation, I'm going to look into our club holding a monthly meeting in the summer rather than stop during the summer months and start up the meetings in September. Sure, I'm busy with work in the summer, but for just one evening out of each month for about 1 to 1 -1/2 hours, I don't think that would be enough time spent attending a club meeting to be a deterrent to stay away from it.

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Not every club takes off each summer. I don't see why ours should be any different! Who knows, maybe a worthwhile radio subject would be presented at it?!

Our club's annual ARRL Field Day event was once again held out at Larry & Sue Hogue's property (W6OMF & K6SUE) and while there was a decent group of members showing up on Friday to help in erecting the event's antennas, only 8 members showed up for the event day and of those 8 members, only 6 were radio operators. Out of a total of 32 club members with the exception of the hosts included in the 32 member count, it still amazes me as your club president as to why only a small handful of members actually participate in a radio event when I would think that more would show up and actually want to participate!!!!!!! Even if the operator doesn't have an HF rig, I offered a member who attended the opportunity to use my HF rig and that member declined. And another member made the same offer to another club member and that member also declined. No one is perfect and neither am I, as in making my radio contacts, I flubbed some on the air. I bought my HF rig a few years when I was a bit more flush with cash unlike these days and at this year's event, it was the first time the HF rig got used and it was my very first time on the HF spectrum frequencies. I've used my other VHF/UHF radios, so I had a little experience in using a radio. So what if the only radio you have is an HT! If I can operate a HF rig, anyone can for that matter. At first, I couldn't figure out how to setup the radio, so I read the manual of both the HF radio and the external tuner needed along with asking, yes fellow members, asking for some assistance and help which was gladly given to me by Larry, W6OMF in explaining to me how similar the Kenwood and Yaesu radios were aside from some subtle differences. He took a chair beside me and showed me how to operate the radio which I thought was great coming from another operator I've only known the short time in being a member of this radio club. His imparted knowledge and wisdom was well absorbed!!

And even after the event closed down on Sunday morning did he and I discuss antenna rotators and what to do and not to do in order to get the maximum life out of a rotator unit when attaching an antenna mast to the rotator. Prior to this discussion, he showed to me and to Jerry, KD6WKY what hard-line coax cable was, what type of connectors were used as well as how much of the cable was put into use between the shack and the antenna end connection all of which can no longer be repeated due to his recent passing. This is what amateur radio is about: Radio operations, information regarding antennas, rotators, coax cable, crimpers vs. soldering techniques, etc., etc.,. Sure there are plenty of books written on various radios, radio equipment and hardware subjects, but to gain

knowledge from another operator is priceless!

After this summer, this club will be looking at putting on workshops in lieu of a monthly meeting and it will be publicized in the monthly newsletter. It is my hope that those club members who want to get more out of amateur radio will attend these future workshops so that they themselves can get more out of their radio even if it's just an HT radio. It may just be a HT radio, but it's yours and what do you want to accomplish with it? Did you go and get your Technician license because someone else told you that by having it, it would make you "special" in an emergency like what may or may not happen on December 21, 2012? Well, if you can't operate and communicate effectively with other radio operators, whose fault is that? Yours or the person who told you to go and get yourself a radio license? Ask questions for those unknown answers of other operators, learn how to communicate effectively in a disaster or an emergency and learn how to use what you already have to its best ability. On Friday evening starting at 7:30 p.m. on the WIN system (WA7G 441.675 MHz & PL tone 100.0) which is found atop the nearby Sugarloaf mountain that is between the Napa airport and Fairfield, this weekly event is a Tech event in that anything technical & radio related can be asked of the radio moderator and it will be answered. Try listening in sometime and ask a question if you don't know the answer to it. Gain the needed knowledge of other operators to be a better operator!

And to Lauren, K6LIV, I think you did a great job in working the radio during the Field Day event. And a big thank you to both Jerry, KD6WKY and to her parents for bringing her to this event and encouraging her in getting on the air. If nothing else was gleaned from that OTA experience, I'm most certain it boosted her confidence in knowing she had the ability to be an effective operator. Of the few times she and I made eye contact during the event, the look on her face was that of "Wow!" With her being on the air as the operator was kinda like the feeling I was having with my very first time on the air using my HF rig! Kudos to Richard, KJ6MIB for bringing out his radio gear and getting himself on the air as well. Although I wasn't able to help him figure out how to connect his external tuner, Lauren, K6LIV was able to help him as it seems that of both manuals he had, only one of them was correct and that he was finally able to get OTA with the external tuner functioning. Of the team of KD6WKY, K6LIV and KK4UX, is was great to learn of the 360 contacts they made. Me? I was only able to make close to 30 contacts. But it was fantastic for my being a first timer on the HF frequencies!!!

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2011
ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Vice President: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Richard Craig, KJ6MIB
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Tom Christman KE6MDM

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

Larry Hogue W6OMF, SK

It was reported by Bob K6HEW on behalf of Sue Hogue K6SUE, wife of Larry W6OMF that Larry passed away Friday, June 29, 2012 due to complications of open heart surgery. It was Larry's wish that his remains be cremated and no memorial service be held.

Many club members can count Larry as part of their journey in obtaining or upgrading their radio licenses or advancing their knowledge of amateur radio through the years. Larry and Sue both hosted VE Exams, Swap meets, Field Day events, two meter nets, and other meetings usually revolving around amateur radio.

Larry was spoken of fondly by all of his neighbors as the guy that helped put up the tire swing for the neighbor kids, had neighbors over for dinner, or was the go to guy for what tool to use for any given job.

We just had the pleasure of using the Larry and Sue Hogue QTH for Field Day 2012 along with their was hospitality. As it turned out, Field Day 2012 was the best FD in many years for our club.

Larry W6OMF was on hand to mentor new radio operators in the use of their rigs or how to talk on the radio.

Larry was a giver. It will be a very long time before a club meeting takes place without noticing Larry is not in the room.

Blessings to Sue Hogue K6SUE. The membership of the W6VVR Vaca Valley Radio is ready to do anything we can do to help you.

ARRL Executive Committee Approves Resource Grants for 11 Schools

06/19/2012

In June, the ARRL Executive Committee reviewed **grant applications** for the ARRL's Education & Technology Program (**ETP**), awarding equipment and resources valued at nearly $16,000 to 11 schools. More than **590 schools across the country** have received support from the ETP in the form of grants for equipment, curriculum and resources, as well as teacher in-service training through the **Teachers Institute on Wireless Technology**. Applications for equipment and resource grants are accepted twice each year; application deadlines are May 1 and November 1.

A central goal of the ETP is to develop a foundation of **wireless technology literacy** among America's teachers and students. It employs Amateur Radio to explore radio science and electronics and provide hands-on activities that engage students' minds and imaginations, opening doorways into math, science and technology curriculum topics, as well as other core curriculum areas such as geography and language arts.

ETP Grants

Grants for school radio stations are awarded to schools that provide a plan to use Amateur Radio as part of an enrichment program and/or as part of in classroom learning. The following schools recently received ETP equipment and resource grants at a total estimated cost of $14,000:

- **Cherry Creek School District, Centennial, Colorado**: The instructors involved with this school's radio program have been very active and aggressive in getting their program going -- and growing -- in the school, including licensing activities and on-the-air activities. The instructors' goals, objectives and expectations for the program are traditional, incremental and realistic. The instructors are graduates of the Teachers Institute on Wireless Technology (TI), and one instructor is attending the advanced TI session this summer.
- **Mogadore Local Schools, Mogadore, Ohio**:The program articulated in this grant application is well thought-out, comprehensive and includes a number of schools within the school district. Their stated goals and assessment strategy is admirable. Even if their goals are only particularly achieved, they will meet or exceed the ETP expectations. This ETP equipment grant will provide the basic equipment needed to get their program started. The instructor is a graduate of the TI program.

· **Burns Science and Technology Charter School, Oak Hill, Florida**: The local ham community in Northern Florida has set a goal to establish a ham radio station/club in each area school. Burns is one school in that area. The school has strong local support and a traditional plan to integrate wireless technology literacy into the classroom. A lead science teacher will be attending the TI this summer.

· **Thornton Middle School, Katy, Texas**: The applying teacher attended both the TI and TI-2 in-service training opportunities and is applying for a station grant to implement what he has learned during those experiences. The program outlined is traditional and doable.

· **St Charles High School, St Charles, Missouri**: The program outlined in this application has set traditional goals that outline the typical school program. The school appears to have good local community support. The teacher is a graduate of the TI, and has taken and passed the licensing exam as a result. The school station, as provided by the grant, will allow the instructor to follow through on the training provided during the TI experience.

· **Forest Knolls Elementary School, Silver Spring, Maryland**: This grant application articulated a realistic program for this elementary school, building on what they have been able to accomplish to date with the limited resources that they have been able to muster. Though understated and not flashy, it appears that the teacher is doing some good things and is looking for help to take the next step. It also appears that the local community agrees.

Petal High School, Petal, Mississippi: The program at Petal is on-going and maturing. There appears to be extensive on-staff support available with licensed teaching staff members. The lead teacher attended the Teachers Institute in 2008. The fact that their program participants have been successful in obtaining ARRL-supported scholarships indicates that the program has received some recognition for their efforts. This program deserves our support to help them take it to the next level.

Progress Grants

The purpose of the ETP Progress Grant is to offer modest resource support to those teachers who are currently using Amateur Radio in their classrooms as an instructional tool and who need additional resources for specific purposes. The following schools received equipment and resource Progress Grants at a total estimated cost of $2000:

- **Central Square Middle School, Central Square, New York**: Central Square is one of the ETP's first school grantees. They are requesting a satellite rotor system to replace one that is aging and broken. Their intention is to prepare for a direct ARISS contact while they fix the equipment that supports their on-going space related curriculum. The instructor is involved with a private "teacher

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Vaca Valley Radio Club has proudly served the Northern Solano County Area since 1988. We pride ourselves in providing a friendly place for radio amateurs to meet and improve their operating skills.

We participate in public service events throughout the year and are always ready to assist with communications during times of emergency.

Browse our website for more information about our club. If you have any questions please email us at w6vvr@w6vvr.net or call 707-448-5665 for assistance.

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at: vacavalleyradio.net

Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3
The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 8pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.2ØØ(-)
WV6F 44Ø.Ø25(+)
WV6F 44Ø.Ø25 – PL 127.3Hz

- "teacher in space" program and appears to be active in space-related activities, as well as active in the School Club Round Up program.
- **Liberal Arts and Sciences Academy, Austin, Texas**: The instructor for this well-established program is a TI graduate and he has run a mature radio club program at the school for a number of years. The school club call sign is frequently at the top of the School Club Round Up score board. They are asking for an automated antenna tuner to go along with the station equipment that they had received a number of years ago to facilitate their HF operations.
- **Sitting Bull Academy, Apple Valley, California**: The instructor of this ETP School is a graduate of the TI and TI -2 programs. He is requesting a copy of the CubeSat Simulator for use in his evolving space borne technology program. Because of his exposure to space borne telemetry during the TI-2, he is in a good position to put this simulator to good use at his school.

Watkinson School, Hartford, Connecticut:The author of this application is a TI graduate. He has recently taken steps to get personally involved with the on-the- air activity, gaining ham radio experience so that he is in a better position to determine how ham radio can be related to his students. The instructor has also taken steps to reach out to the local ham community for help.

Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

With only a few weeks to go until the Element 4 exam pool of questions expired, I pass the Amateur Extra exam at a VE session in Santa Rosa administered by Dale Westerterp WB6TMS and the Sonoma Mountain Repeater Society volunteer examiners.

I had taken the exam several times in the past, missing a passing score by one question twice in early 2008 before giving up. I just felt it wasn't worth my time any longer to keep taking the test and failing it. As a General Class licensee I had plenty of bandwidth to work with and the frustration wasn't worth the effort any longer.

Awhile back a client gave me a copy of the Amateur Extra Class Study Guide by Gordon West, WB6NOA because that is what he used to pass the test. I didn't even open the book for over a year because I wasn't interested in revisiting the test. I didn't see the point with 270+ countries confirmed DXCC, WAS twice, and tons of wallpaper from various contests. Nothing about the Amateur Extra license mattered in what I was doing. I know many people that have the license, but don't do anything with it; Extra Class licensee with an HT.

Sometime in March or so I decided to open the book and take a look at it. Much of the material was familiar as usual. The book had a CD in it so I listened to it and decided to buy the CD series that goes with the book. I figured it would make more sense to listen to the lectures and follow along in the book.

I ran the CDs in the car while driving and at home in the evenings with the book open to follow along with Gordo as he explained theory, formulas, and provided audio examples of what things should and should not sound like as they related to the exam. I never once bothered to take a practice exam on any of the various websites. I continuously went over the material making it as familiar as possible to me as I worked through the book.

On test day I didn't think about whether I was ready or not, it didn't matter to me, if I failed it I'd take it again at some point. In the test room were about 15 people mostly taking the Technician Exam with two people taking the General Class Exam and me taking the Extra Class Exam.

I'm pretty sure I was the last one done after about 45 minutes I didn't pay attention to who passed or failed other than the guy next to me taking the General Class Exam. He failed.

Since everyone was done there was no need to whisper any longer so everybody still at the test site started talking in a normal volume voice. In a little while I heard in a somewhat louder voice one of the VEs complaining that the Extra Class license category was getting too crowded and that the exam needed to be made more difficult as he was signing the Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination. I figured I had passed at that point. He was just kidding.

Dale WB6TMS observed I was from Vacaville and mentioned to me he gets many people from our area because there doesn't seem to be many VE Exam opportunities in our area. I said I'd pass it along to the club, thanked him and left the site to have a bite of lunch and do some insurance work.

I worked V73NS (Marshall Islands) on 15m CW at 21.005 MHz using KD6WKY/AE and reminded the SOB that he sent me an OO card a few years ago for working him out of band during the ARRL International DX Contest. I did work him out of band by mistake. He sent me an email which I responded to acknowledging my error and informing him I would be more careful contesting. The SOB sent me an OO card anyway. I didn't appreciate that and told him so. It's like getting a speeding ticket; the cop should either give the lecture or write the ticket but not both.

Now that the old exam pool of questions have been replaced effective July 1, I have recycled all my old study materials and I feel great about it! 73!

The Other FCC: The NTIA

For many radio amateurs, the NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) seems akin to the NSA (No Such Agency). Most of us have vaguely heard a few bits and pieces about the NTIA, but have no real idea what it is, or what it does. In reality, most radio amateurs have no *official* interaction with the NTIA, but many of us have dealings with the NTIA in our professional careers. The NTIA is the federal equivalent of the FCC with authority over federal radio communications while the FCC is concerned with nonfederal communications.

The NTIA actually has an interesting history, though not as old as the FCC's, going back only to 1978. In fact, on NTIA's own website, there is a very good history of radio regulation in general, going back to the turn of the *last* century.

Just like the "pre-FCC" of ancient history, the NTIA is within the Department of Commerce. The "genetic line" of the NTIA actually is a combination of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy and the Commerce Department's Office of Telecommunications. These were merged in 1978 to form the NTIA.

I first became aware of the NTIA in the late 1980s while helping design the High Power Auroral Stimulation (HIPAS) Observatory (sadly, now decommissioned) for the purpose of ionospheric studies. I learned that the monstrous HF ionospheric heating transmitters were licensed not by the FCC, but by this mysterious entity, the NTIA. I had further dealings with them while obtaining a license to build a new ionosonde (ionospheric sounder), for which the FCC granted no license.

Looking at Figure 1, we see that there is actually a well-defined division of responsibility between the NTIA and the FCC. In effect, the NTIA has jurisdiction over all federal government communications, while the FCC has everything else. In accordance with this, the venerable Voice of America shortwave station (see Figure 2) is licensed by the NTIA, not the FCC. Likewise, a great deal, if not most, scientific and research communications fall under the authority of the NTIA.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely — Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues --------- $20.00 _____
Each Family Member -- $ 2.00 _____
Student ---------- $ 5.00 _____
Repeater/Autopatch donation --- _____
Call/Name badge -------- $11.00 _____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues ---------- $37.00 _____

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DATE:_____

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